(f) if so, the remedial action being taken by the Railway Board; and

(g) whether Indian conventional coaches were found better than German Coaches?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The rake of new German coaches introduced on Lucknow-New Delhi Shatabdi train has been withdrawn temporarily as a measure of abundant precaution due to teething troubles associated with the new design of centre buffer coupler used on these coaches. These coaches are under warranty by the supplier.

(c) Does not arise as the coaches are being attended by the firm under warranty.

(d) Does not arise as the German coaches have not been introduced on other routes.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) Team of experts from the original equipment manufacturers are carrying out in depth examination of couprel related issues in association with Indian Railways and suitable corrective measures will be taken on the basis of this study to eliminate chances of reoccurrence of these problems.

(g) No, Sir. The new coaches represent a much advance generation in coach technology which despite some teething troubles during its introduction are superior in many respects including safety, passenger comfort, fuel efficiency, speed, capacity and maintainability as compared to the indigenous coaches which are based on technology of early fifties.

Rakesh Mohan Committee

738. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN"
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 3920 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 20th April, 2001 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Rakesh Mohan Committee has recommended to bring about comprehensive changes in the Railways;

(b) if so, the details of the changes recommended;

(c) whether Government have taken any decision to implement such recommendations; and

(d) if so, the details of recommendations decided to be implemented together with the recommendations not to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (d) The Railway Expert Group headed by Dr. Rakesh Mohan has submitted an Interim Executive Summary of the report on 17.2.2001. The Major recommendations of the Interim Executive Summary are:

1. Institutional separation of roles into policy, regulatory and management functions. This will mean:

(i) Policy makers are limited for setting policy (and paying for what they ask for). The Government of India will be in-charge of setting policy direction.

(ii) Provide operational autonomy and insulate Indian Railways by corporatising it into "Indian Railways Corporation" (IRC). It would be governed by a reconstituted Indian Railways Executive Board.

(iii) Set up an Indian Rail Regulatory Authority to regulate IRC's activities as a monopoly supplier of rail services particularly related to tariff setting.

2. Ex ante acceptance and commitment by the Government and Indian Railways that Indian Railways will operate on commercial lines. Non-commercial activities mandated by the Government will be clearly demonstrated and Indian Railways appropriately compensated for such activities.

3. In view of financial crisis Indian Railways to pursue the strategic High Growth pattern for financial recovery.

4. Provides exemption from taxation—excise, sales tax etc. for the period of transition, say 5—7 years.

5. Set up a Social Safety net to take care of surplus labour.

6. Restructuring of financial accounts of Indian Railways in accordance with the Company's Act, 1956.

7. Spinning off non-core activities.

8. Rebalancing of tariffs to eliminate cross subsidisation.

The Expert Group is yet to submit its final report. The interim Executive Summary is under examination by a Committee of officers of the Railway Board. Final decision on the report will be taken after receipt of the final report of the Expert Group.

Central Reservation System

739. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Reservation System (CRS) went on the blink in the first week of May, 2001, and such a collapse can re-occur any time;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the system is out-dated and needs re-vamping immediately as there is no back-up or a bail-out to deal with such a situation;

(d) what steps are being taken to change the system; and

(e) by when it would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) It is true that there was a major breakdown of the Passenger Reservation System at Delhi on 7.5.2001. A procedure to avoid recurrence of all perceivable failures is already in place.

(b) Due to very heavy bookings compression of one of the important file became essential. This resulted is slow response to the reservation activity. System was restored by shutting it down and restarting after accounting reconciliation and recovery of about 700 terminals.

(c) Yes Sir, the system needs augmentation.

(d) The exercise for replacement / augmenting of existing systems is underway and is in final stages.

(e) The work of replacement of the systems is likely to be completed by 31.12.01 on all Railways.